

**-DRAFT-**  
**Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday Aug. 12, 2020 at 5 pm**

**Via teleconference. The meeting was carried live on WGATV Channel 79 and  
Youtube @WGATV79**  
**YouTube Video of the meeting can be found here: [https://youtu.be/IT\\_V8rNH-1Q](https://youtu.be/IT_V8rNH-1Q)**

First Selectman Heller called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm and read the following statement:

*“In accordance with Governor Ned Lamont’s Executive Order 7 B Section 1, which suspends the open meeting requirements of in-person participation, audio and video of this Regular Meeting is being simultaneously televised live on WGATV Channel 79 and youtube@WGATV79, in order to allow the public to view and listen to our meeting.”*

Ms. Heller confirmed (via roll call) the following in attendance:

*Deputy First Selectman Mica Cardozo  
Joseph J. Crisco, Jr.  
Joseph S. Dey III  
Beth Heller  
Dwight C. Rowland  
Sandra T. Stein*

*Administrative Officer/Director of Finance Tony Genovese  
Assistant Administrative Officer Betsy Yagla  
Town Counsel Gerald T. Weiner*

First Selectman Heller delivered her report to the Board:

I’d like to thank the Registrars of Voters, our Town Clerks and the many poll workers who helped make yesterday’s Presidential Preference Primary a success. They made the best out of a difficult situation and we all owe them a big thank you. As a former Registrar, I know how much work a presidential preference primary is under normal circumstances. They had to get it done during a pandemic, with a week-long recovery from a tropical storm, with the extra safety protocols and the new legislation that allowed so many to vote by absentee. They did an amazing job!

I’d also like to thank our Human Services staff, our volunteer Fire Department, Police Department, Public Works Department, and Animal Control Officers for responding promptly and professionally to all our residents during and after Tropical Storm Isaias.

During the height of the storm our emergency responders answered close to 200 calls with reports of wires down, trees down and trees crashing through homes. Calls continued throughout the weekend

into yesterday. We set up outdoor charging stations so that people could charge their devices and also publicized that potable water was available at the Center Building and Fire House. Massaro Farm stepped up and offered charging stations and water as well. As of 2 pm yesterday, one week after the storm, our last three homes were re-connected to power. Cable and internet problems continue, and we are working to resolve those.

We have also waived the fee to dispose of brush at the Transfer Station to aid residents in their cleanup efforts. Starting on Monday August 17<sup>th</sup>, the Public Works crews will be coming by each street in town, just once - again, **one time only**, to pick up storm-related debris. We are asking that residents please cut limbs to 4 feet or less.

Luckily, we did not need to open our shelter but we were prepared, if necessary, to operate it even during a pandemic.

To keep everyone informed, we sent out an e-newsletter, kept Facebook updated and I sent out several CT Alerts to all residents.

I've been asked to remind folks to sign up to be added to the Human Services' emergency call list – this list is for residents who are elderly, have a health issue or are disabled. During emergencies, the department calls residents on the list to ensure they are safe and offer any help they might need. Our police and fire department are also at the ready to help. To be added to the list please call 203-389-3429.

As another reminder, residents who wish to receive emergency updates from the Town must sign up for CT Alert at [ctalert.gov](http://ctalert.gov). The statewide system uses the reverse 911 system to reach everyone with a landline and you can also sign up to receive notification on your cell, text or by email.

I am convening a virtual meeting tomorrow with our fire, police, human services, public works, and animal control department heads to review our storm response.

Regarding the pandemic, I have heard from several concerned parents over the last few weeks that they are seeing a lot of people at Pease Place Playground not wearing masks. Per Governor Lamont's executive order, anyone over the age of two should wear a mask when not able to maintain a 6-foot distance. I am putting everyone on notice now: If I continue to hear complaints about this we will have to re-close the playgrounds.

Testing data in Connecticut continue to show that we are doing a good job of keeping COVID-19 at bay, but I believe that that is because people are wearing masks and maintaining social distance. If we relax those two important activities, we could see a surge in numbers. I desperately want to keep all our residents safe. I know how important it is to be outdoors and to play but if it is not done safely I will be forced to close the playgrounds again.

As I have noted before, I was greatly moved by the Black Lives Matter event that was organized by Micaela Cardozo, Tobenna Nwangwu, Ryan Rattley, Zofe Reed and others and held on our Town Green a few months ago. It was apparent that the event was a great start, but a start only, on the work that Woodbridge should be doing to enhance and ensure diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our Town life.

Attention to these issues has already been springing up in Town, for example with the Community Council's well attended, informative and moving Zoom presentation by award winning author, Ed Gordon on July 28<sup>th</sup>. I am also aware that at Beecher Road School there is an active *Diversity Committee* of parents and teachers taking a holistic look at diversity at the school and at Amity Regional High School, there is a *Diversity in Action Club* of active students with motivated faculty to assist and guide them.

To strengthen and coordinate these efforts and to assure an ongoing, committed focus on racial, ethnic, & religious issues. I am appointing today, **The Woodbridge Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Inclusion**. The charge to the Committee is:

1. To identify and assess issues related to diversity and inclusion, or the lack thereof, of concern to Town residents and employees and as experienced by them;
2. To prioritize the identified issues and establish the order in which the Committee should focus on them;
3. To delve more deeply into the issues in the order prioritized by the Committee;
3. To determine steps that would ameliorate problems identified and enhance diversity and inclusion in our Town;
4. To report to the Board of Selectmen monthly on the activities, progress and recommendations of the Committee.

The Ad Hoc Committee members whom I am appointing today are:

Lor Ferrante Fernandes  
Dr. Neelima Kaushal  
Robert Reed  
Ellen Scalettar  
Mauriel Vega

Ellen has agreed to be chair of the committee and Robert Reed will be the vice-chair. Each of these individuals has accepted my invitation to join the Committee with enthusiasm and commitment and I thank all them for accepting this responsibility.

Regarding the Old Firehouse – we had hoped to have a discussion about plans for future use, and how to finance it. We are still working on it – we were unable to get the updated information in time for tonight's meeting. I hope to have it on our agenda in September.

Since our last meeting I attended a short ceremony, modified for the pandemic, to present the First Selectman's Youth Award to AJ Pocweirz. As a part of the Woodbridge Fire Department Junior Firefighters, AJ has volunteered countless hours for the Department. In addition to the fire department, AJ volunteered for Special Olympics. He and his father were active with Boy Scout Troop 63, and AJ built seven wood footbridges as part of his Eagle Scout project, for which the town is very appreciative. I continue to participate in the Governor's weekly calls with municipal officials regarding the pandemic response. These calls are held every Wednesday at 5 pm, and our police and fire chief also attend.

I attended the Board of Finance meeting on July 16, and I chaired the monthly SCRCOG meeting on July 22, both virtually.

Finally, I want to thank everyone in Woodbridge, who stayed strong and worked together through the past week's storm. I am so proud of all of you. Thank you everyone!

#### **Woodbridge Board of Education Superintendent Bob Gilbert**

Superintendent Bob Gilbert delivered his report to the Board and introduced Interim Superintendent Christine Syriac, the former superintendent of Seymour. Mr. Gilbert discussed the plans for reopening the school during the pandemic and the Board wished him well in his retirement.

#### **Massaro Community Farm update**

Caty Poole, executive director, updated the Board on the farm's activities during the pandemic and the farm's role in hunger relief efforts.

#### **Professor Cosimo Sgarlata**

Professor Sgarlata provided an overview of his architectural findings from his dig at the Town-owned Bladens Brook area and requested permission to dig additional test pits there.

Mr. Crisco made a motion to approve permission. Mr. Rowland seconded. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Heller made a motion to add liaison reports to the agenda. Mr. Crisco seconded. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Stein reported on the Library Commission and their discussions to possibly reopen in a limited way. She also reported on the Thomas Darling House Advisory Committee's first meeting at which they voted unanimously to recommend that the Board of Selectmen make arrangements to remove and dispose of the old schoolhouse (Little Lucy) from the yellow barn. They are waiting for a similar letter to the BOS from the Amity Woodbridge Historical Society.

Mr. Rowland reported on the activities of the Inland Wetland Commission and the Human Services Commission which is submitting a STEAP grant for renovations at the Senior Center.

Mr. Crisco reported on the activities of both the Board of Police Commissioners and the Fire Commission.

Mr. Cardozo was unable to attend the Economic Development Commission meeting and there was no Recreation Commission meeting.

Mr. Dey had nothing to report.

**Public Comment** – there was none.

#### **Budget Task Force**

Mr. Dey gave a report on the task force's work including an overview of the guidance for department heads when it comes time to submit the coming year's budget.

Ms. Stein recommended, and it was the consensus of the Board of Selectmen, that the guidance and proposed schedule be recommended to the Board of Finance and ask that it becomes part of their FY22 criteria.

### **Transfer Station Update**

Mr. Genovese provided an update on the Transfer Station since the scale was installed. He reported that in the 10 months since the scale has been operational the Town has received nearly \$60,000 in income from commercial haulers using the scale. He also reported that the total tonnage of municipal solid waste the Town is taking to the Bridgeport fuel to energy plant has dropped by approximately 20%.

### **Authorize First Selectman to sign STEAP Grant Resolution**

The STEAP grants are now available for up to \$128,205 and the Senior Center will be submitting an application to be used for renovations. Mr. Cardozo made a motion to authorize First Selectman Heller to accept a 2020 Connecticut STEAP Grant in the amount of \$128,205 for a Senior Center Renovation Project and to authorize First Selectman Heller to enter into and execute any and all agreements, contracts and documents necessary to obtain said 2020 STEAP Grant with the State of Connecticut. Mr. Crisco seconded. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

### **Administrative Officer/Director of Finance's Report**

**Funding Requests** – Ms. Heller made a motion to approve line item transfer 2021-02 in the amount of \$9787 for the purchase of Microsoft Office 365 subscription services. Mr. Cardozo seconded. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Heller made a motion to approve funding request 2021-03 in the amount of \$50,000 for Tropical Storm Isaias debris removal. I think this is for brush removal all over town from Police Machinery – an old closed out project Mr. Crisco seconded. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

**Fire Truck Lease** – Mr. Genovese reminded the Board that in December 2018 the Town entered the Huston Galveston Area Purchasing Cooperative and bought a fire pumper truck through it. The pumper is now being finalized will soon be transferred to the Town. When the truck is transferred the Town will need to secure financing for it. Mr. Genovese received indicative rates and the lowest rate was Chase at 1.25% for a payment in arrears. When the truck arrives the payment will be set.

Ms. Heller made a motion to move forward with the purchase of the truck with the best available rate at the time. Mr. Crisco seconded. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

**Other** – Mr. Genovese provided an update on tax collections. Of the \$200,000 deferred one half was paid on time. He said that real estate taxes are a little behind normal, personal property is on par and the motor vehicle taxes are a little behind.

### **Assistant Administrative Officer's Report**

Ms. Yagla reported on efforts of two interns to help promote local businesses through videography and photography by documenting how businesses are safeguarding clients and staff during COVID-19.

### **Town Counsel's Report**

Mr. Weiner shared an appeal regarding the Town Plan and Zoning decision regarding the installation of a turf field at Amity Regional High School. The appeal is contesting the approval and the Town and school

will be defending the TPZ decision. The plaintiffs have also requested an injunction. Mr. Weiner reported that normally these cases take 9 months to one year to be heard but because of COVID 19 the courts have large backlogs.

#### **Report of the Personnel Committee**

Ms. Heller reported that the Personnel Committee met earlier in the day and shared that the committee voted unanimously to recommend to the Board of Selectmen that Samuel Zombar be offered the full time position of Public Works mechanic at \$31.01 per hour – Step B – subject to a successful background check and physical, hopefully by September 1.

Ms. Heller made a motion to approve the recommendation. Ms. Stein seconded. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Heller reported that the Personnel Committee voted unanimously to recommend to the Board of Selectmen that Kira Edic be offered the full time position of Adult Services Librarian at an annual salary of \$45,081 and that Emily Cantor be offered the full-time position of Children’s Assistant Librarian at an annual salary of \$31,395 beginning Aug. 13, 2020.

Ms. Heller made a motion to approve the recommendation. Ms. Stein seconded. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

#### **Appointment: Woodbridge Board of Education to June 2021**

Mr. Cardozo made a motion to nominate Lor Ferrante Fernandes to the position and he listed her educational background. Ms. Stein seconded the motion.

Ms. Heller, Mr. Cardozo, Mr. Crisco, Ms. Stein and Mr. Rowland voted in favor. Mr. Dey voted in opposition stating that he was unhappy with the process, not the nominee.

#### **Town Clerk’s Reports**

Mr. Cardozo voted to Acknowledge Receipt of the Town Clerk’s Reports. Ms. Stein seconded. All in favor; the motion passed unanimously.

#### **Minutes – July 8**

Ms. Heller made a motion to approve the July 8, 2020 meeting minutes. Ms. Stein seconded. Ms. Heller, Ms. Stein, Mr. Cardozo and Mr. Crisco voted in favor; Mr. Rowland and Mr. Dey abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

On a non-debatable motion Ms. Heller moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Crisco seconded. All in favor; the meeting adjourned at 7:09 pm.